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ABSTRACT

This publication is designed for teachers and other educators who want to write grants but don't know how to get started. Topics covered include: the basics of proposal writing; common elements required in all grants; preparation for writing a proposal, such as researching the project and the funding agency; writing effective proposals; how proposals are evaluated; common errors; foundations; alternative funding sources; inkind support; and tips for looking for grants. (ND)

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GRANTS FOR BEGINNERS

THE PAINLESS GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

THOMAS L. NEWCOMB, PH.D.

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Grants for Beginners

Compiled and Written for Teachers and Other Educators Who Want to Write Grants But Don't Know How To Get Started.

(c) 1996
Dr. Thomas L. Newcomb
Newcomb Publishing

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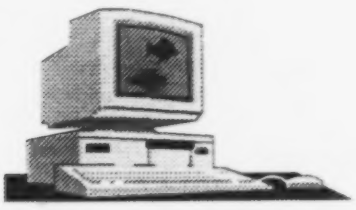


CONTENTS

Introduction and Basic Proposal Writing

Writing Your Best Proposal

How Will My Proposal Be Evaluated?

Common Errors That Can Kill Your Request

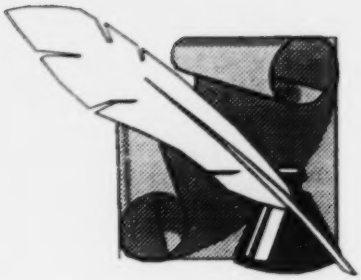
Foundations... Hard To Find And Hard To Define...

Alternative Funding Sources

The Hard Facts

What Is Inkind Support?

Tips For Looking For Grants



If you have a great idea for a teaching project, special unit or new approach to instruction, and no budget to cover the necessary expenses you might wish to apply for an educational grant to fund your dream. Your school district, local businesses, your state education department , private foundations and special organizations all give away money for new and innovative approaches to education.

Where do you look for sources??? Everywhere!!! Talk to someone who has written and received grants in the past, read and watch for notices in educational journals and publications, check with your local district office for notices about grant opportunities, check grant making reference guides in your local library.

All grant applications are different and vary from very long, technical required forms to short, fill-in the blank one to two page forms. All grants, however, will ask for certain common elements....

HEADING and Applicant Information
Who you are, where you teach, your address, personal information.

PROJECT TITLE
Some will want a brief one sentence description while others will ask for a creative title for the project.

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST
The total amount of what you want in monies.

PROJECT SUMMARY
A statement of what this project is and what it will do. Next you will need to describe clearly and concisely the ways you'll achieve your goals. Finally give supportive details and philosophies.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

Tell who and what numbers will benefit from your project. Specific information and statistics are helpful. Give important information about your target group.

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

Who will work on the project and what will they do? Be sure to include any previous experience with special projects or grants.

NEED

State why this project is needed and worth supporting.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

What are the goals you hope to achieve with your project.? These goals should have a time frame and be measurable. You should support your objectives with facts whenever possible. Objectives should have clearly stated outcomes.

METHODS

In detail describe how your project will achieve and meet your stated objectives. Describe all your steps and methods. A time line, pictures or graphs are acceptable in this section.

EVALUATION

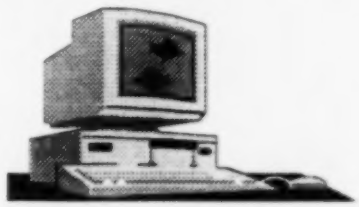
How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the project? How will you know your objectives have been met? What measures or procedures will you use?

BUDGET

Closely estimate your costs. Be specific as to what all funds will be used for and how your purchases and expenditures relate to your project goals. It is also good to list other sources of support that you have secured.

SUMMARY

In a few sentences state the overall view of your project. How is it innovative? Why do you feel qualified to carry it out?



WRITING YOUR BEST PROPOSAL

1. Contact the agency first. Ask for pertinent writers guides, forms, and any other information that is available about their grant giving. First person contact with someone at the agency is good at this point. Show your interest with personality and courtesy.

2. Prepare a preliminary proposal or a summary of your project.

3. Have several colleagues or interested individuals read and comment on your ideas in your summary. Look for groups or individuals to endorse your project. These are helpful additions to your final grant proposal, and many times, are required by the grant giving agency.

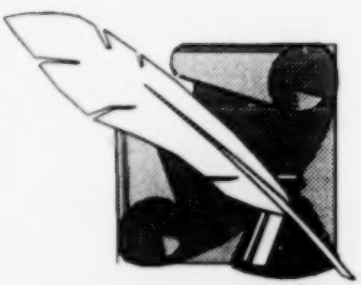
4. Do your homework. Research and become an expert on your topic of interest. Try to find out who will be competing with you for grant monies.

5. Write your grant using all the research, information and guidelines you have put together. Use the forms you have obtained or use the general guidelines in this booklet.

6. Be neat, be professional and be accurate in your proposal. Show that you are confident with your ideas and your abilities.

7. Have a neutral person proof, check and review your final project draft. Be ready to answer questions or accept suggestions for improvement or clarity.

8. A cover letter of transmittal should always be used when sending in your grant request.



HOW WILL MY PROPOSAL BE EVALUATED?

Some foundations and organizations clearly define how grant proposals will be evaluated while others may not. MOST organizations will look at the following, however,...

1. Are you and all others involved competent to carry out the proposal?

2. Is your proposal realistic and sufficient?

3. Is the the need important?

4. Is your proposal original and creative in its approach?

5. Does your proposal follow the goals, focus and policies of the foundation or organization?

6. Will your project apply to other situations, and can it be adapted and used in wider circles?

7. Is there a need for support, are other sources unavailable, or are additional funds secured?

8. Is the budget sound, and are all costs justified and explained?

9. Are the proposers and project participants dedicated and committed to this proposal and the plan of the project?

10. Are the objectives reasonable, clearly defined, and is a means of evaluation clearly planned?

COMMON ERRORS THAT CAN KILL YOUR REQUEST

1. The budget is not closely explained or does not match the needs outlined in the proposal.

2. The application is lacking information that was required or requested. The information is not specific enough to justify or explain the need or procedures.

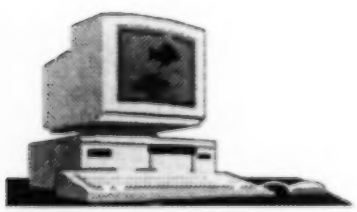
3. The application is too wordy, or contains too much jargon that is not familiar to the organization (they are a business or foundation--they are not educators).

4. Supporting information is weak in the application. The need is not clearly defined and proven.

5. Activities are disorganized or unclear in the proposal. The work plan or procedure is not clearly explained.

6. The application and information is hurt by errors in grammar, spelling or math. The information is messy, or information and attachments are missing.

7. The application or proposal is for a project, school or subject not normally supported by the foundation or grant giver by its charter or mission.



FOUNDATIONS...HARD TO FIND AND HARD TO DEFINE...

INDEPENDENT FOUNDATION...An independent organization formed to give grants or support to charitable activities.

COMPANY SPONSORED FOUNDATION...A grant making organization with close ties to the corporation providing the funds.

OPERATING FOUNDATION...An organization which uses its monies for research or to provide specific direct services.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION...A public supported organization that makes grants for charitable groups in specifically defined communities or regions.

Best bets for securing grant support: Independent Foundations and Community Foundations.

ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

1. Parent organizations

2. Service clubs, associations

3. Local businesses

4. Corporate foundations

5. Alumni groups

6. Government agencies (local, state, federal)

7. Special corporate assistance programs

THE HARD FACTS

1. Private Foundations generally give to higher education.

2. Many private foundations do not give small grants.

3. Private foundations generally are not interested in giving operating support to public schools.

4. Private funders like to see matching funds or other sources of funding in proposals.

5. Many private foundations do not give for classroom or one school projects.

6. Public schools are competing with nonprofit agencies for private foundation monies.

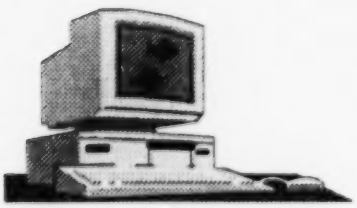
WHAT IS IN KIND SUPPORT...?

Many foundations and organizations are offering in kind support rather than cash dollars for projects. In kind support may range from prepackaged programs or services (science fair kits, student recognition programs, etc.) to actual services (xeroxing, paid utilities, guest speakers).

When researching your grant proposal or looking for grant support, keep in kind support in mind. Some businesses or organizations may be able to offer you support through in kind services. This may eliminate the need to ask for monies, or it may provide partial support that you can list in your grant proposal to another organization or foundation. Generally, in kind support can strengthen a grant request.

Some of the larger businesses or corporations may have a directory of in kind services that are available upon request or by making specific application.

Many civic organizations may offer assistance in finding corporate support via Adopt A School Programs or by helping match in kind services from businesses to specific schools. Check with the area Chamber of Commerce listed in the Yellow Pages.



TIPS FOR LOOKING FOR GRANTS

1. Professional journals and publications will often have announcements.

2. Your school district office and administration often receive grant opportunity mailings.

3. Check with the education department of your local college or university.

4. Believe it or not, look under "foundations" in the yellow pages.

5. Check for information under "grants" or "foundations" at your local library or surf the World Wide Web if you are connected.

6. Talk with someone who has successfully written grants in the past, especially if you know the person.

7. Research at The Foundation Center, Cleveland, Ohio: 216-861-1933.

WHEN CHECKING OUT A FUNDING SOURCE, ASK YOURSELF...

Does my proposal idea:

-match the objectives of this organization?

-ask for a dollar amount in line with the grant size this organization gives?

-benefit the people or cause that this organization wishes to support?

-serve a geographic or purpose area that this organization has an interest in supporting?